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CHURCH UNION

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NEWS AND VIEWS

AUGUST 1958

Things are Happening: America, Scotland, India.

CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

Vol. 3 | **Organ of the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in North India and Pakistan** | **No. 3**

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

Urgency and Patience

WHEN the Church of South India was formed, it was agreed that no fresh decision on certain matters should be taken till after thirty years had elapsed.

As we understand it, this was no mere device to give time for awkward people to die off, nor was it because the decision which would then be taken was a foregone conclusion. It meant rather that Union could not be delayed till every detail of the debate was settled ; and it meant recognition of the truth that when those who have been estranged come together, time must be given for the work of healing and to learn together what the Spirit is teaching,

In the Northern *Plan of Union* a different approach is made to the particular questions involved, and there is no mention of a definite period of time. But in the North also it is equally understood that the moment of union will not bring complete agreement on all points of difference. By the act of union divisions are ended, we begin to live together as one family, to be nurtured in common worship and to take counsel together in the same courts of the Church. It is within that fellowship that we trust that the Holy Spirit will, in His own time, lead us to an understanding that we cannot find apart. We do not ask that we may know the answer before we come together.

Of course, even apart from Union, discussion sometimes (fruitful discussion) goes on about our points of difference. We too share in that discussion and find ourselves eagerly wanting to persuade others of our convictions, even before we unite with them. Nevertheless, the *Plan of Union* is not based on the idea of such prior persuasion. That way has been deliberately *not* followed, and that for very good reasons.

When our arguments are marshalled they usually strengthen the convictions of those who agree with us ; but all too often those who disagree are led by them to make a sharper defence of their own view. Unfortunately, also, our impatience can then trap us into saying sharp and bitter things about the position with which we disagree. There are so many obvious defects in all our churches that this pointing of the finger is lamentably easy and we can expose one another to shame. The trouble is that this rarely draws us nearer to our critics ; instead it arouses our alarm that we have been so misunderstood and, to our dismay, we see the dividing walls rise higher.

It cannot be too often underlined that the *Plan of Union* does not profess to give a verdict on these disputed matters. The Negotiating Commitree has not attempted to decide these on their merits. What it has most seriously tried to do is to grasp what the different churches have held to be essential in their understanding of the implications of the Gospel, and to devise a Plan of Union which will *make room* for these, while equally *leaving room* for those who differ.

Consequently, what the churches have now to decide is not whether or not the views themselves are correct, but whether or not they can wholeheartedly enter into one fellowship with those who hold these views. What they have to decide is whether or not the Plan now before them is a successful attempt to carry out that principle of " Comprehension " on which it is based.

The source of the *Urgency* which calls now for action is the flagrant way in which our present divisions openly contradict that unity which Christ created when He made us

one through His Cross. That *Patience* which is called for from us all is a willingness not to insist on a prior answer to every question but to bear with those from whom we differ, because we are one with them in Christ believing that in His own good time the Holy Spirit will teach us together what He would have us do.

The Editor wishes to record his great appreciation of the work done by the Rev. B. F. Price in carrying on this journal, at such a high standard of interest and usefulness during his furlough.

He regrets that, owing to certain unexpected delays, he finds himself offering to the readers an issue which contains a disproportionately large amount of material from his own pen.

Materials for Study of the Plan

Translations go on apace, and so also do arrangements to promote the study of the *Plan of Union* far and wide.

1. **Translations;** According to our information these are now available:

(i) *Urdu*: Indian Editor from the Masha'l Printing Press, Kharar, Dt. Ambala, price 31 nP.

Pakistani Edition from the Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore, price 4as (Constitution) and 2as (Inauguration of Union)

(ii) *Hindi*: From the North India Christian Tract and Book Society, 18 Clive Road, Allahabad, price 31 nP.

(iii) *Marathi*: From the Christian Book Shop, 84 Sankli Street, Bycualla, Bombay, 8. price 35 nP.

(iv) *Bengali*: From the Christian Tract Society Bookshop, 44A Lower Circular Road, Calcutta, 16, price 37 nP.

(v) *Gujerati*: To be published at the beginning of August.

(vi) *Oriya*: An Oriya summary of the Plan is available.

2. **Fresh Literature:** The United Church of Northern India has published a reprint of an article entitled "A Concise Guide to the Plan of Union" which appeared in the *United Church Review*. A Bengali version is also available. Enquiries may be made from the Editor of the *United Church Review*: Rev. F. W. Whyte, 16 Elgin Road, Calcutta, 20.

3. **Study Conferences:** The following announcement has been received regarding the forthcoming conference at Rajpur:

The Conference on Church Union, mentioned on page 32 of the May issue, will now be held, at the invitation of the Christian Retreat and Study Centre, at Rajpur, near Dehra Dun, U. P., from September 30th to October 3rd, inclusive.

This Conference will be limited to about 15 members, to be invited from the Negotiating Churches mainly from the area comprising the Punjab, U. P., Rajasthan, and contiguous parts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

The object is, in a context of Bible study and worship, to give an intensive study of the Plan of Church Union, and of the problems and difficulties connected with it, so that the members may be able to take a lead in promoting a better understanding of the Plan in their Churches.

The Retreat and Study Centre is generously providing board and contributing to travel expenses. T. D. S.

ii. Bengal Church Council (U. C. N. I.) announces that it is devoting a "Fellowship Day" to the study of the Plan immediately before its regular biennial meeting, in August.

iii. From Gujerat news comes of a proposed special meeting of a Union Council (U. C. N. I.) together with representatives of the churches to study the Plan in Gujerati.

iv. The Church Union Committee and Executive Committee of the Synod of Maharashtra (U. C. N. I.) are planning a special day's conference in Poona early in October to study the Plan.

Other conferences and special studies may well be going on in many places, but news of these has not come to the Editor. More and more needs to be done, so that understanding of the proposals may be quickened throughout the Churches.

News of these Conferences is urgently wanted, so that we may learn from one another.

Church Union among the Younger Churches*

IT is a familiar fact that one of the greatest contributions which has been made by *young* Churches in *Asia and Africa* to the world-wide Church is the movement towards Church Union. This year is the tenth anniversary of the most significant Union so far, that of the Church of South India. But other unions had taken place before that, including an earlier South India United Church, composed of two big denominations; and I myself am a minister of the United Church of Northern India, which represents no fewer than twelve parent bodies. Yet no one is satisfied with the measure of unity achieved and the Church of South India is engaged in active conversations now with others in its area; while in North India our United Church is seeking a much wider union which would result in a new Church of North India. Similar things are happening in Africa and in other parts of the world.

The Driving Force

What is it that has been the driving force leading to this drive towards visible union?

It seems to me to have been threefold:

1. In a mainly non-Christian country, *Christians* recognise one another and *know that they need each other.* Here the denominations are big and have settled down to their own life and one seldom feels in them the sense of urgency to carry the Gospel to the whole country. But in India Christians number barely one in fifty of the population; they are conscious of how big is the unfinished task of evangelism; there is no denomination which can feel strong enough in itself to face the great tasks of Christian teaching and healing, let alone responsibility to preach the Gospel to all creatures. Christians know that they need one another, and for many years have sought means to work together.

2. But along with this is *the sense of frustration* which comes *from the fact that nevertheless we are divided.* The Gospel which we preach is a Gospel of reconciliation and healing, and it is desperately needed. But our words are contradicted by our deeds, when in fact we are not reconciled to one another; when Christians are unable to sit down together at the Table of our Lord, and when in the last resort their decisions must be taken in sectional groups, isolated from one another. There have been people of other religions who have been held back from becoming Christian just because they knew that in the Christian Church they would be divided.

3. But thirdly there is a reason which is just as compelling in this country as it is on the Mission Field. That is that *the very Gospel message which we preach is that God has made us one.* We cannot forget that the Gospel is in the indicative mood; it speaks of what God has done, and it is that He has reconciled us unto Him; He has made both one; He has slain the enemy; He has broken down the middle wall of partition. He has, through Jesus Christ on His cross, brought us into the body of Christ, and there is but one Christ. Whether we have wished it or not, to have been received into Christ means that we have been brought into a relationship of unity with one another. We belong together. This is the Gospel, and the work of Church Union is not the seeking after what we have to achieve; it is a putting out of the way those divisions which bear false witness to what God has done.

What Unity Means

If these are the reasons which drive the Churches to seek external visible unity, we may also ask what it is that this unity implies. To that the simple answer is that the churches feel called *to show forth in each place that the company of those who belong to Christ are openly and visibly one family,* and further that *the Christian travelling from one place to another is received* in each place where he comes *as already a member of the family.* We are not strangers or sojourners but fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God. And this also means that, when we think of the organisation of the Church to cover the country, we know that what we are concerned with is not just the giving of friendly advice as between neighbours, who may or may not be concerned with it, but that we are taking counsel together to seek the Lord's own will for the whole family, and where it is the Lord's will it matters directly to us all.

*An address given by the Editor in Dunfirmline, Scotland, December 1957.

This is why the kind of union which is sought is rightly called "*organic union*", for if we do belong to one another in Christ nothing less can properly express that truth. In South India such union was brought about between three Churches—the Anglicans, the Methodists and the earlier South India United Church. Similar unions are being sought in countries like Nigeria in Africa, and the one which I know best which is in North India. There too the plan includes the episcopalians, the Methodists and our United Church, but here there are also the Methodist Episcopalians and various Baptist Churches making a total of seven which are negotiating union. The representatives of these seven churches, after many years of conversations and negotiations have now prepared a Plan of Union, which it is for the Churches concerned to accept or reject. Our hope and prayer is that they will be satisfied, and if so we look forward to the accomplishment of Union by 1961 or 1962.

The Essence of the Plan

A Plan of Union like this seems to involve three separate acts which are essentially very simple, though it takes so long to bring them about. They may be summed up in the three words: *Recognition*, *Acceptance*, and *Agreement*.

1. We begin with *Recognition of one another as truly brethren in Christ*. True it is that we have been apart from each other, and in our separateness we have become familiar with different ways of worship and of Church government. True it is also that on some quite important matters, for example the practice of Infant Baptism, our convictions differ. Nevertheless, we have recognised one another as brethren in Christ, and we have seen that God has blessed the ministry of His Word and Sacraments as it has been exercised in these different denominations. Therefore, in spite of our differences, we take our stand as Peter did concerning Cornelius and confess that these are they whom God Himself has called.

2. But if we truly recognise one another that is not a point at which we can stop; *we must then truly accept one another with all the consequences which flow from that acceptance*. We cannot be satisfied to go our separate ways if we really do both belong to Christ. We cannot shrug off responsibility saying, "Am I my brother's Keeper!" And *the Act of Church Union is essentially an act of mutual acceptance*. This is far more fundamental than questions of Church order and administration, for the Church consists of the People of God. But this acceptance does not depend on us passing judgement on one another, even on our differences. It involves *an attempt to make room for our brethren* to come without giving up matters on which they are conscientiously convinced. It is an acceptance which knows well that we shall have to go on in a fuller learning of what God's will is for His Church. The experience of the Church of South India is there to assure us that when Christians do so accept one another they do grow in understanding and so far from feeling that they have had to give up what they counted precious, they find that they have that still and so much more.

3. Yet there is a third element involved if our acceptance is to be real and complete, and that is *agreement as to how exactly we are going to live together in the future*. It is true that many things can be left open, just as in the now united Church of Scotland there are some congregations which have a Board of Managers and some which have a Deacons' Court and some which have a Congregational Board. And yet, even with that diversity, we have an agreement as to how each minister will sit on the Presbytery and how an elder will accompany him there and so on to the Assembly. In the same way in our *Plan of Union*, it is agreed that differences may continue in the administration of local churches, differences will continue in the ways of worship with which we have been familiar, and differences of opinion will still be recognised about how we ought to do certain things. Yet *there has been agreement on the way in which in fact we shall live and work together in the Church as a whole*. And here we have recognised that in truth the three ways in which, by tradition, the Church has been administered, do not exclude but can supplement one another. These three ways are known as congregationalism, presbyterianism and episcopacy; but all of them are ways by which men and women have tried to find and follow the will of the Lord for His Church. The Uniting Churches boldly believe that each of these has its contribution to bring and this is how the Plan sets it out:

> The Church of North India affirms that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church.

> The Church of North India accepts the presbyteral, congregational and episcopal elements in Church order as the means through which the lordship of Christ in His Church may be realised and as necessarily involved in its polity.

In consequence our Constitution sets out with the familiar *Presbyterian* pattern of taking counsel together, whether it be in the local session, in the diocesan council which will take the place of the Presbytery, or in the Synod which is our supreme court, and in these councils our ministers and our laymen will sit together. Yet at the same time, we are accepting from the *episcopal* churches the work of those who are called Bishops, who will preside over these councils and will be, within the rules of the Church, as pastors to pastors and the chief pastors of the flock. But finally, within the same plan, the *congregation* in each place is recognised as being wholly the Church Catholic in its own area and we are well reminded of the place that each Christian must fill in these words :

> To the whole Church and to every member of it belong the duty and privilege of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God, and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Thus we are trying to come together, and *receiving the different elements of Church order not so much in and for themselves as because we receive one another.* No one thinks that it will necessarily be easy to live together in this way, for after all we have all grown familiar with our ways and it is in a sense easier to keep on without change. *But far bigger than that is the unity which Christ has made. We belong to one another in Him, and the act of union is one which looks not backward to old quarrels, but forward to the fulness to which He calls us.* That is why the spirit of these plans of union is summed up in these words :

> The Church of North India is keenly aware of the fact that divergence of conviction on this matter is something which can only be borne within one fellowship by the exercise of much mutual forebearance and charity. Nevertheless it believes that it is called to make this act of faith in the conviction that it is not the will of the Lord of the Church that they who are one in their faith in Him should be divided even for such a cause as this. It further believes itself to be called to this venture in the confidence that in brotherly converse within one Church, those of diverse convictions will be led together in the unity of the Spirit to learn what is His will in this as in other matters of difference.

Obituary

THE REV. PHILIP JOHN.

The Negotiating Committee on Church Union has lost one of its most faithful members in the passing of the Rev. Philip John at Arrah, Bihar, on 26 May last, only a few months after his retirement from the active service of the Baptist Missionary Society. Mr. John exercised a faithful ministry throughout North India and especially in Bhiwani, Gaya and Patna. He was a greatly loved and respected leader of the Baptist churches associated with the Baptist Union of North India, and also played a large part in the wider life of the church in India through various Union organisations. He was a tireless advocate of the cause of Church Union, both among the churches of his own denomination and among the other Christian groups of North India. At the time of his death, as well as being a member of the Negotiating Committee he was serving as a member of the Hindi Bible Revision Committee and the Executive Committee of the United Mission to Nepal. He had been far from well for some time but there seemed every reason to expect that he would soon be fully restored to health and strength again. Shortly before his death he attended a meeting of the Bihar Christian Council against the advice of his family, and on his return from that meeting had to take to his bed, and he died suddenly on May 26th. He leaves a widow, children and grand-children, for whom our prayers are offered that they might be upheld by God's grace at this time and that the memory of their father's life may be a great inspiration to them.

E. G. T. M.

It is Happening Elsewhere.

Union of Presbyterian Churches in the United States

Rev. C. H. Hazlett

THE three largest Presbyterian bodies in the United States have been The Presbyterian Church in U. S. A., The Presbyterian Church in the United States (frequently spoken of as The Southern Presbyterian Church) and the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The first has existed, although not from the beginning with the present name, from colonial times, and at least one of its members was a signer of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The United Presbyterian Church of North America came into being in 1858 through union of the Associate and Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches. At the time of the Civil War (1861-1865) over slavery between the North and the South of the United States, Presbyterians in the southern states felt that they could not continue in fellowship with their northern brethren, and in 1861 The Presbyterian Church in the United States was formed. Almost from the time the Civil War ended efforts were made to bring about the reunion of Northern and Southern Presbyterians, but that goal has not yet been attained.

An Attempt that Failed

For at least a generation many in all three groups have recognized that there are no sound reasons for their remaining separate and that the reasons for their becoming one are immediate and urgent. Some years ago this conviction found expression in the formation of a Joint Committee to negotiate for union. A Plan of Union was agreed upon by the negotiators and was submitted to the three Churches. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and The United Presbyterian Church of North America voted for the union, but The Presbyterian Church in the United States voted against it, so the three-way union did not materialize. The Southern Presbyterian vote against union was due in part to suspicion as to the theological soundness of Northern Presbyterians, in part to fear that Northern Presbyterians would use their numerically greater strength to force upon the South unwanted desegregation of white and coloured people, and, as is so often and sadly the case, in part to attachment to its traditions and way of doing things.

Successful Negotiations

Immediately after the failure of the three-way union The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and The United Presbyterian Church of North America entered upon negotiations for union. A Plan of Union was presented to, and approved by, their Assemblies of 1957 and sent to Presbyteries for a 'yes' or 'no' vote. Nearly all Presbyterian U. S. A. Presbyteries voted 'yes' and more than the required majority of United Presbyterian Presbyteries voted for the union. A good deal, but not all, of the initial opposition to the union on the part of United Presbyterians was due to fear that it would be a case of absorption rather than union, inasmuch as The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. had much the larger membership: those fears were largely dispelled in the course of the negotiations and by the Plan itself.

Thus there has come into being the new Church, whose official name is *The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. The last Assemblies of the two uniting groups were held simultaneously in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and then, on May 28, 1958, there was held in that city the uniting and first Assembly of the new Church. At the time of the union The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. reported a membership of 2,791,547 and The United Presbyterian Church of North America a membership of 311,025, so the new Church begins with a membership of a little over three million. The Rev. Theophilus D. Taylor, professor in Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary of the former United Presbyterian Church and a leader in the negotiations for union, was by acclamation elected the first Moderator: it is of special interest to us in India that Mr.

Taylor was for a number of years on the staff of Woodstock School, Landour. The Stated Clerk (Secretary) of the new Church is Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, formerly Stated Clerk of The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., and the Associate Stated Clerk is Dr. Samuel Shane, formerly Stated Clerk of The United Presbyterian Church of North America.

Associations with India

For those in India and Pakistan who are in association with the new Church the immediate difference is that they are no longer related to two Boards of Foreign Missions, but to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the new Church. As the somewhat cumbersome name indicates, the Commission has wider functions than direction of participation in overseas work: it has to do with promotion of still wider unity and with relations with Churches in other countries. This Commission is successor to The Board of Foreign Missions and the Permanent Commission on Inter-Church Relations of the former Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.; and it is successor to The Board of Foreign Missions, the Permanent Committee on Inter-Church Relations and the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs of the former United Presbyterian Church of North America. The constituting meeting of the new Commission held in New York City on June 16, 1958 cabled the following greeting: "The Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America holding its first and constituting meeting today sends heartiest greetings to all its missionaries, fraternal workers and national Church colleagues. We are with you in deep spiritual fellowship, earnest prayer and full commitment that in these crucial and challenging times Christ's will may be done and His Kingdom of peace may come. God bless and keep you all."

A significant result of this union is that the new Church has, probably, greater commitments than any other for work among Muslims. The former United Presbyterian had work in Egypt, the Sudan and Pakistan; the former Presbyterian Church U. S. A. had work in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Indonesia, Pakistan and India. The new Commission already has in hand plans for a 1959 consultation on work among Muslims.

Methodist-Episcopal Talks on Intercommunion Proceed

A JOINT press release issued by the commissions of the Methodist and Episcopal Churches conducting discussions on unity declares:

"Because of the common heritage of the two Churches, it has been possible for the commissions to conduct their discussions on the basis of the following presuppositions thought to be held in common by both Churches:

"(1) There is but one universal Church of Jesus Christ, who Himself gives unity to its members. The unity of the Church must be visibly manifest in faith and order: in worship and common life.

"(2) The Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church are both within the Holy Catholic Church, and their individual baptized members are mutually recognized as members of Christ's Church.

"(3) Since no communion in divided Christendom alone can embody the fulness of the universal Church, both Episcopalians and Methodists would expect to come closer to that fulness through the sharing of the gifts of God in fellowship and intercommunion with one another.

"(4) Churches of both communions seek to express their convictions of historic continuity with the Church of apostolic times. The chief instruments of this continuity are: the ordained ministry, Holy Scripture, preaching the Gospel, doctrines and creeds, the dominical Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and a life in corporate fellowship.

"(5) The intercommunion which is being sought is to be understood as the mutual and reciprocal sacramental communion between the two Churches. It includes the possibility of the interchange of ministers as celebrants and the privilege of communicant members of each to participate fully in the services of Holy Communion in churches of the other.

"(6) Each Church recognizes the ministry of the other as having been used by God for

the witness of His Word, the care of His people, and the upbuilding of His Church. But the ministry of neither Church is at present universally accepted in scope and authority in the visible Church.

" Conversations between the two commissions began in 1942, and actual negotiations have been continuous, with joint meetings once or more annually, since 1948. The agreed basis of discussion since 1948 has been the exploration of possibilities of intercommunion as an approach to organic union.

" Each commission will ask that it be continued by its governing body so that a more concise plan may be worked out to insure a better understanding of the doctrines and practices of the other Communion and through which there can be a mutually satisfactory unified ministry of the two Churches.

" The report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity will be presented to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church when it meets at Miami, Fla., in October of this year. The Commission on Church Union of the Methodist Church will report to its General Conference which opens in Denver in April, 1960."

The commissions issuing the statement are the Commission on Church Union of the Methodist Church and the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity of the Episcopal Church.

—From *The Living Church* Weekly record of the Episcopal Church in America.

May 11th, 1958

From Other Points of View

THAT the alarms which sometimes disturb us as we contemplate Union are not unknown elsewhere is suggested by the following extracts from an article in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* of 26/6/58 : *The Snark and the Boojum* :.....The " Hunting of the Snark " it will be rememberd is mainly an account of " Conversations " between members of a very mixed delegation. But from the beginning some members of that team are inhibited by depressing fears. The exhilirating quest for the Snark is offset for them by the fear that too late the Snark may turn out to be the dreaded Boojum, in which case they will " softly and silently vanish away ". This has an evident parallel to present discussions about bishops, and in particular the distinction between the " Historic Episcopate ", about whose importance all Anglicans seem agreed, and a particular High Church doctrine of the " Apostolic Succession." And he who listens carefully for undertones in the various reports can easily discern the fear, not always expressed, of the Non-Episcopal negotiators that they might enter into some reunion in which none are pledged to any particular interpretation of the episcopate only to find, too late, that the rigid " catholic " doctrine has in fact triumphed and precious principles have vanished away. The historic Snark may prove to be the Apostolic Boojum.....

.....if Christians cannot overcome their differences in the spirit of the Gospel it may be that the Lord of the Church will teach them by the Law, the hard way, the less excellent way, also described in " The Hunting of the Snark " :

> But the valley grew narrower and narrower still
> And the evening got darker and colder,
>
> Till (merely from nervousness not from goodwill)
> They marched along shoulder to shoulder.

" I do hope we are not going to have unity ".—Remark of an anxious Scots lady to a minister outside the Scottish General Assembly.

The Problem of the Practice of Baptism

(1) The Reaffirmation of Baptism

Rev. T. S. Garrett

THIS is by way of being reflections on the Rev. E. L. Wenger's article, *The Problem of So-called "Re-Baptism,"* which appeared in the last issue of this journal. A member of the Church of South India intervenes with some diffidence in a controversy between the Baptist and Paedobaptist negotiators of union in North India and Pakistan. Owing to the withdrawal of the Baptists from negotiations in the South and, in consequence perhaps, a certain hardening of the C. S. I. position in relation to Baptists, we have not had to face the Baptist issue in the full acuteness of its challenge. My observations must therefore be prefaced by a recognition of the weakness of my position in presuming to say anyting and also by acknowledgment of the probability that some, at least, of the ground has already been covered in debate and negotiation.

The point in Mr. Wenger's article that must at once strike a Paedobaptist as inadmissible, is his suggestion that the baptism as a believer of one who had been baptized in infancy would not be regarded by Baptists as "re-baptism", but as baptism *de novo*, infant baptism not being baptism at all. If, as Mr. Wenger suggests, the refusal to permit this kind of baptism in the United Church would mean that the union already had in it the seeds of disruption, equally would this be so if it were permitted. It would imply official, and not only private, doubt about the baptism of all who had been baptized in infancy and therefore doubt about their Church membership. One can hardly expect Paedo-Baptists to tolerate this. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would mean that for fifteen hundred years at least of Church history the majority of Christians have not really been members of the Church at all.

The arguments for and against the two modes of Christian initiation are too familiar to require repetition. Their very inconclusiveness and the inability of one side to convince the other is perhaps a cogent pointer to the probability that neither way of initiation is the only right and possible way and that God has blessed both ways "with undistinguishing regard", even if there have been abuses, particularly of infant baptism. If, then, Baptists are ever to unite with those who practise the latter, the minimum of accommodation required of them must be to recognise infant baptism as real, though irregular. This is not very different to the attitude which many episcopalians are prepared to adopt towards the non-episcopal ministries and which is again the minimum required for union to be possible.

What is to be done then with this–from the Baptist standpoint–"irregular" baptism; or if we prefer to echo Mr. Wenger's argument, this baptism which is "defective in intention"? It is strange to find him using against infant baptism a concept which the Roman Catholics have used in denying the validity of protestant ministries. If in the following paragraphs something both new and old is brought forth from the treasury of Rome as a possible solution to the difficulty, I hope no one will be offended.

Both the glory and the crux of baptism is its unrepeatability. This applies to believers 'baptism as well as infants'. If, to create a hypothetical analogy for argument's sake, it had been the tradition of the Church to administer Holy Communion only once in a life-time, some way of repeatedly reaffirming it would have had to be found. And in the case of baptism this is in fact what the Church from ancient times has done. I am not referring only to confirmation, an integral part of which is the acceptance by the believer of baptismal vows and a reaffirmation, therefore, of baptism. This too is unrepeatable, and the young person who makes the affirmation may not fully understand its singnificance, just as the newly baptized believer may not fully understand all that his baptism means. I refer rather to the Easter vigil, going back probably to the first century and recently restored to something of its primitive character in the Roman Church, in which the whole Church takes part in the baptismal

liturgy, except for the actual baptism itself, and all its members renew their baptismal vows. The fact that this reffirmation meets a spiritual need is indicated by the form of renewal of baptismal vows which has been included by C. I. P. B. C. in its proposed prayer book. One may also discern the same intention in the Methodist service for the renewal of the covenant, although baptism is not explicitly mentioned in it.

I know such a reaffirmation has been proposed before for the United Churches and has not been accepted by those Baptists who demand the right to administer believers' baptism in its fullest form even to those already baptized in infancy. In favour of its reconsideration there are three main points to commend it which need to be weighed.

(1) A Church which thus at least once a year corporately renewed the baptismal vows of its members could hardly be accused of having a defective intention with regard to baptism. Whatever lack there may have been in the administration of the sacrament to infants would again and again be filled up by the Church's prayerful reflection on what it means to be baptized.

(2) Instead of setting the two ways of initiation (infant baptism and believer's 'confirmation on the one hand and infant dedication and believers' baptism on the other) over against each other with only a grudging mutual recognition, Baptists and Paedo-baptists would thus unite in a positive act of worship intended to make their baptism in the past real to them in the present and to renew and increase their understanding of its meaning according to the measure of their maturity in the Christian faith and life.

(3) For those baptized in infancy wh perhaps after conversion doubted th adequacy of their baptism and felt the urge t undergo believer's baptism, surely it would b better that they should reaffirm their baptis in union with the whole Church than th they should plead for a private exemptio from the long established rule of the Churc and thereby imply doubt of the baptism of a others baptized in infancy. Such peop would always be at liberty to bring up the children in the Baptist way or encoura others to do so. But it should be represente to them that for the sake of union the should deny themselves and learn to see i baptismal reaffirmation the way that the should personally take.

Needless to say, protestants would not b bound to make this reaffirmation of baptis on Easter Eve. Holy Week and Easter a already well provided with religiou observances and the addition of one, whic would to most be new at that time migh not be acceptable. The precedent of th Methodist Covenant Service suggests th first Sunday in the New Year as an equal suitable occasion, which for those who wis to observe the liturgical calendar would com close to Epiphany, when we remember ou Lord's Baptism. Another possible time wou be pentecost. It might well be regarded advisable to teach our people that to mak this reaffirmation once a year should be obligatory as to receive communion at lea once a year. Only so would baptism recei the place in the life of the Church whic Baptists rightly claim for it.

(2) The Corporate and Individual Aspects of Baptism

Dr. A. P. Stone

In the debate which goes on between the protagonists of infant baptism and believer's baptism there is one factor which may provide the clue to a fuller understanding of the whole situation. This factor is the tension between the ideas of the individual and the community. The word community here means the group as standing over against the individual and not as standing over against any other group. It is commonly recognised that paedo-baptists stress the corporate and non-paedo-baptists the individual aspects of baptism. But we may ask whether com muity and individual are not the *controllin* ideas, perhaps unconsciously, on the tw sides. This suggestion will be illustrate from the controversy between Cullmann an Barth over the question of baptism. In a attempt to provide a wider persepective w shall consider a possible reconciliation o these conflicting ideas. The question of desire for re-baptism is also touched on.

In the mind of any one person, one of th extreme ideas, individual or community, wi

be relatively dominant and the other proportionately weak. It is important to realise that where the influence of the dominant idea is unconscious it will not be recognised, unless some mental process brings it into consciousness. For this reason, the present point of view on baptism may not be immediately acceptable. Psychological inquiries have established the fundamental influence which unconscious processes have on thought and behaviour. Theology, as a human activity, is not to be exempted from this influence.

The two emphases

We shall first look briefly at the way in which the two different stresses appear in the doctrine of baptism. In a service like the Anglican service of infant baptism the God-parents make radical promises on behalf of the child, showing that children are thought of as inextricably part of the Christian community. Cullmann says that in baptism the child is passively set by God in the Body of Christ, independently of any faith or understanding on its part[1]. He sees in the New Testament the idea of collective holiness; whereas faith is required of adult converts, the solidarity of a Christian family is sufficient warrant for the baptism of children born into it[2]. This illustrates the importance of the idea of community for infant baptism. Barth recognises a danger in this attitude. The motive behind support for infant baptism can be a desire for community in the bad sense, which in Europe has taken the form of a desire that the church should be a National Church[3].

The position with regard to believer's baptism has always been clear. From the Petrobrusians in the 12th century and the first Baptist Confession of Faith in 1610[4] to the present day[5] there is a constant emphasis on the response of the individual to God. The restriction of baptism to believers follows from the Baptist view of the church as the fellowship of believers. It is interesting to note that the modern Baptist movement began in the 16th century, by which time the individualism of the renaissance had established itself in Europe.

Cullmann and Barth

We shall now look more closely at the difference between Cullmann and Barth's attitudes to baptism. Cullmann opposes Barth at points where the need for individual faith is made an argument against infant baptism. Barth holds that being born into a Christian family does not imply entry into the Christian church[6] but Cullmann replies that he has 'underestimated' the importance of the family[7]. Cullmann[8] asserts a correspondence between the circumcision of Jewish children and infant baptism, namely reception into the Old and New Covenants, and finds it 'inexplicable' that Barth[9] should deny the correspondence. Then when Barth says that according to Rom. 4 the true children of Abraham are not identical with his descendants, distinguished by circumcision[10], Cullmann maintains that this is no argument against infant baptism because he has concluded that individual faith *after* baptism is what matters[11].

These differing interpretations support the contention that Barth's views are controlled by the idea of the individual and Cullmann's by the idea of community.

Desire for re-baptism

In the *Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan* there is considerable parity between the two ways of admission to communicant membership[12]. Church services always include both the individual and the corporate aspect but the corporate aspect predominates in the services of infant baptism and infant dedication. In confirmation and believer's baptism the individual aspect is stressed. From the present point of view, if the idea of individuality should come to dominate, consciously or unconsciously, in a person baptised in infancy, a desire for re-baptism might be felt. It is hardly possible

[1] Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, S. C. M. Press, pp. 31, 20.
[2] Ibid., pp. 43, 51.
[3] Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism*, S.C.M. Press, p. 52.
[4] H. Wheeler Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, Kingsgate Press, pp. 62, 71.
[5] Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan, C. L. S., 3rd ed. 1957, Appendix C.
[6] Barth, op. cit., p. 50.
[7] Cullmann, op. cit., 45.
[8] Ibid., p. 57.
[9], [10] Barth, op. cit., p. 44.
[11] Cullmann, op. cit., p. 67.
[12] Plan of Church Union, ch. VI. A.

to say that the Holy Spirit does *not* work in this way.

A reconciliation

In the case of an adult convert there is no problem. Where children of Christian parents are concerned, the emphases on individual and community can be reconciled within the practice of baptism, though in an unfamiliar way. This is possible if baptism is considered to have been completed only after two rites involving the use of water have been performed, one as an infant and one later as a believer. This would not be re-baptism but one unrepeatable baptism in two parts. In this life our experience is fragmented into the succession of events and even in the present baptismal services it takes a finite time to administer baptism. From the point of view of time, the difference between a few seconds and a number of years is only quantitative. The theological meaning of baptism may need those years for its full expression. 'Christian initiation', which at present includes infant baptism and confirmation, or infant dedication and believer's baptism, at different times, may perhaps be better thought of as this 'extended baptism'. The tension between the individual and corporate aspects of baptism can be transformed into a tension in *time*, which may be more acceptable. Both infant baptism and believer's baptism are beginnings. 'extended baptism' would emphasise the fact that baptism comes at the beginning of the *process* of growth in the Christian life.

Baptism itself must be distinguished from baptismal practice, which should be meaningful and satisfying to the people concerned. 'Extended baptism' might be the right practice in a suitable climate of opinion. If it is objected that it is not found in the New Testament we may reply that neither is infant baptism nor believer's baptism for the offspring of Christian parents directly provable from the New Testament[13].

Summary

Infant baptism and believer's baptism have been examined from the point of view of the tension between the ideas of individual and community. There are reasons for believing that these concepts influence the theology of baptism to a considerable extent. As a reconciliation within the practice of baptism, the idea of 'extended baptism' has been introduced. The question of the theology and desirability of such a practice is left open.

[13] Cf. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 70.

(3) Faith and Order*

The Baptist Union of India have issued a lucid and interesting booklet which sums up the work of a Conference on Faith and Order, held at Balasore in March 1958. More Baptist churches were represented than are involved in the present Union negotiations, but this very fact makes the findings all the more valuable.

The Booklet mainly consists of statements on the following subjects:

(i) The Baptist Conception of the Nature of the Church.

(ii) The Baptist Conception of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(iii) The Baptist Conception of Religious Freedom.

The statements obviously are not authoritative or binding, but are offered as "a sincere attempt to express as clearly as possible the truths inherent in the Scriptures..." on these matters, and in the hope that they will prove a basis for further thinking and discussion.

Non-Baptists will find here a valuable indication of the kind of understanding of these matters which the Baptist churches are likely to bring into the common store of the united Church; and one reader at least finds here much promising material for further exploration when the different points of view can really meet.

An Appendix deals with "Baptists and Church Union". This is, in the main, an appraisal of the North India/Pakistan *Plan*. It is encouraging to find that it sets out eight features of the Plan which are wholeheartedly welcomed, and that, of five others which diverge from Baptist practice, it is recognised that they give no reason why Baptists should reject them in the way they are proposed.

There remain two matters, however, which

* *Report of Conference on Faith and Order* (20 pp) obtainable from Rev. J. I. Richardson, Theological College, Kakinada, Andhra.

it is feared will lead many Baptists "to reject" the Plan entirely and which "will cause great hesitation in the minds of many others". These concern the proposals for the Unification of the ministry and the kind of provisions which have been made for alternative forms of Baptism.

Study of these provisions is not yet at an end in any of the Negotiating Churches, and we have all to remember that they have been devised in an attempt to implement that basic principle of "comprehension" which does not wait until all are agreed on every matter in dispute. One would hope that it will be possible for those who study the Plan to look at these provisions again and to answer these questions: (1) Would anything else really leave room for the convictions of those who sincerely hold a particular view of ordination or who have consistently upheld the full reality of Infant Baptism? (2) Are the provisions now made really of such a kind as to commit those who do not share these convictions to a necessary identification with them?

W. S.

One Step Forward in Scotland

Rev. William Stewart

STUDY of the Joint Report on *Relations between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches** will continue in Scotland.

This is the chief outcome of a vote taken in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May, 1958. It was taken at the end of a long and animated debate, which held a packed Assembly in unbroken session from 10 in the morning till well after 3 in the afternoon, was a vote which meant the rejection of a proposal to have nothing more to do with the Joint Report at all.

Country-wide Interest

Seldom indeed can a Church Report have provoked such lively interest as this one had done throughout the year. More than 70,000 copies of the Scottish edition were sold, hardly a week passed without daily newspapers printing "letters to the Editor" to argue for or against the Report (usually against!), pamphlets and articles poured from the presses, and no matter where one travelled to speak about the Church in India, it was never long till the conversation turned to this Report, the "Bishops' Report" as everyone called it.

Certainly in Presbyterian Scotland there was a good deal of sheer prejudice in much of the discussion, for there are long memories and suspicions of episcopacy. Again, the Report and those supposed to be responsible for it were the target of an unscrupulous campaign by a daily newspaper of large circulation. And certainly for many, who know no Church near them except the familiar "Parish Church", it was difficult to see what all the urgency was about, for England was a long way off!

But this was not the whole story. All over the country Christian people were being stirred to concern over the continuation of Christian disunity, and they were pondering the Report to see if it showed a way of hope. All over the country meetings were being held to learn more about it, and to hear speakers who could tell about Plans of Union elsewhere, in Ceylon and in North India and Pakistan. Indeed, as the year went on, sales of the North India *Plan of Union* steadily went up in Scotland. All over the country too, Presbyteries were studying the Report and the large "Inter-Church Relations Committee" of the General Assembly, refusing to be hustled, gave it prolonged and careful consideration.

The Assembly Committee's Report

The Committee's consideration was summed up in its own Report to the General Assembly, which was the basis of the debate. The Committee expressed clearly some of the criticisms of the Joint Report which were being widely made. These include the following: (i) If it is unity that is sought (and nothing less is good enough) then surely a

* Already reviewed in our issues for Nov. 1957, Feb. and May, 1958—Ed.

central place must be given not just to a study of "Presbyterian-Anglican" differences in general and some reduction of these, but to the question of actual *union of churches* which live side *by side on the same territory.* This is the crux of the matter. How do we stand with our Christian neighbours? In Scotland, that means the search for union between the Episcopal Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland.

(ii) There is a clear statement on how serious a stumbling-block it is to many that there is not inter-communion between the Churches now, a lack which seems to cast doubt on our recognition of one another as being truly within the one Catholic Church.

(iii) Dissatisfaction is expressed with the fact that, while the Report speaks of "each party sharing with the other the authority held by itself", yet the actual proposals for securing wider recognition for the ministries are a one-sided suggestion that Anglican Bishops should consecrate bishops for the Presbyterian Churches. Here the Committee has shown a lively interest in the North India/Pakistan proposals in these words :–

> It would further seem to be essential that, in order to make interchange of ministries between two separated Churches possible, some act of mutual recommissioning would have to be accepted on either side, as, for example, by the laying-on of hands in a solemn act of rededication with prayer, such as is proposed in the "Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan". Only if this were done, each side thus seeking the grace of God for the wider and more effectual fulfilment of their ministry, would full recognition of one another's ministries become possible. Through such mutual recommissioning there would be secured a ministry fully accredited in the eyes of all the members of the Churches on either side.....

These expressions of criticism brought reassurance to many in the Church, for they showed that their legitimate concerns were not likely to be overlooked. But the criticisms were not made for the sake of criticism or to obstruct further conversation. They were made rather to set these conversations on a firmer basis, and their positive purpose is made clear by this first and unanimous recommendation of the Committee :

> We believe that the search for a full understanding with the Episcopalian Churches and not least with the Episcopal Church in Scotland, should be continued earnestly prayerfully, and without intermission.

Arising from this conviction, it was proposed that Presbyteries be instructed to resume study of the Joint Report, in the light of the comments now made, and with instruction to report their opinion and further suggestions by the end of this year 1958.

The General Assembly

To some it seemed that the time given was much too short and they asked the Assembly to extend it. Others thought it would give point to the study if Presbyteries were asked to compare the Report with the North India/Pakistan proposals. Finally others, and these the most vehement, some of them speaking for their Presbyteries, urged that the Church have nothing more to do with the proposals at all.

Through the midday hours the debate went on, moving reminders of the spiritual issues involved alternating with appeals to tradition or to principles hardly won. When at last the vote was taken, it was the Committee's proposals which carried the day winning more votes than were cast for all the counter motions combined.

What Happens Next

This decision does not mean that the Joint Report is going to be approved; indeed it seems certain that its proposals will have to be greatly modified. But it does mean that the weight of opinion in the Church of Scotland is convinced that a way of healing for our open Christian divisions must be found and that the opportunity of these conversations between episcopalian and presbyterian must not be thrown away. Nor is it less heartening that the same Assembly, on the same day, welcomed the news that the Congregational Union of Scotland had accepted an invitation to enter into discussion of ways of possible union with the Church of Scotland. The evidence is unmistakable that even in the tradition-bound churches of the west, the summons to seek visible Christian unity is being increasingly heard.

Within a few weeks of the General Assembly in Edinburgh, a very different company

was gathering in London, the Lambeth Conference of Bishops of Anglican Churches in all the world. They too are seeking the way of visible Christian unity. They too have before them the Plans for Union in Ceylon and in North India and Pakistan. They too have before them the "Joint Report". What happened in Edinburgh was not hidden from these bishops assembling for Lambeth, and surely it must have been encouragement for them to know that, in spite of the noise of controversy, no door was being slammed elsewhere while they in their turn looked to the proposals. Surely too they would be able to take up that study in the light of the "Inter-Church Relations" Report, understanding more fully what it is that their Presbyterian brethren count precious.

There has been one step forward in Scotland. The way is long and arduous, but it is one more token that as we work at our task here in India and in Pakistan, we share a common task with brethren in other parts of the world. Therefore we are encouraged.

The Inauguration of Union

(Services Proposed for Use at the Inauguration of the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan: Published for the Negotiating Committee by the Christian Literature Society, P. O. Box 501, Madras, 3; price 75 nP).

While active consideration of the actual *Plan of Union* is going on in the various Negotiating Churches, it would be a pity if attention were not also given to the companion publication, which gives the Proposed Services for the inauguration of union. The approval of the Churches is wanted on these services as well as on the *Plan*.

It has often been observed that a service of this kind casts a great deal of light on proposals which, in themselves, might seem capable of different interpretations or to lack full clarity. That is why the Negotiating Committee attached a good deal of importance to the preparation of this booklet, which has been on sale now for a good many months. It is also to be noted that there are certain questions which sometimes are asked, to which clear answer is given in the proposed services.

For one thing, the proposed services make absolutely clear both the completeness and the unity of the acts of worship in which the Union of the Churches will be brought about, and also the order of the various steps which make up that whole action.

The vital thing is that *the whole event is an act of Worship*, and that too is worship which culminates at the Lord's Table, when it is proposed to follow the order of service of the Church of South India. Here indeed is a reminder that, in all that is done, the blessing of God is the supreme necessity and that the first act of the fully united Church will be at the Lord's Table.

Within the service itself, we also discover that *it is the actual Union of the Churches which constitutes the first and decisive step.* After opening adoration and confession, with a short prayer for God's blessing, the representatives of the uniting Churches will read and lay on the Communion Table the decisions of their respective church authorities which declare their assent to the Plan. Thereupon the President Minister is to lead in a prayer which is completed by a united use of the great Family Prayer which our Lord taught us, and then "*The Minister Presiding shall make this solemn declaration, all standing*:—

> Dearly beloved, in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, who on the night of His betrayal prayed that His disciples might be one; and by authority of the governing bodies of the uniting Churches, whose resolutions have been read in your hearing and laid in prayer before Almighty God, I do hereby declare that these seven Churches, namely.....
> within the area of union are become one united Church of North India/Pakistan.

Then indeed shall the Doxology be sung: "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow*".

It is only after "silence for a space" and then the singing of the great hymn of worship: *Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty* that the service moves on to the first actions of the now United Church. These actions are

(i) the preliminary "bringing together" of the two Episcopates, when a presbyter from one of the non-episcopal churches will conduct the worship, and then (ii) the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry.

The services make it abundantly clear that in the first of these actions Bishops are not being appointed for the United Church; but rather the difficulty which arises from the fact that they have belonged to two different Episcopates is being set aside. The Bishops, like the Presbyters, thereafter take their full share in the Representative "Act of Unification of the Ministry". Here the wording which is set out in the *Plan* is used, both in the declarations made and in the prayers and act of unification. There is no discrimination suggested according to the past tradition of the different groups of ministers, but the effect of the act is that all the ministers alike will then be recognised as belonging "fully and without exception" to the ministry of the one Church. It is to be noted that at this stage of the service, reference is no longer made to "the uniting churches" but to the "churches now united". In recognition of this event, the whole people again unite in an act of praise, using these words:

Minister: Glory be to the Father, Who has made us one

People: Glory be to Thee, O God

Minister: Glory be to the Son, who saved us all

People: Glory be to Thee, O God

Minister: Glory be to the Holy Spirit, Who has united us by His power

People: Glory be to Thee, O God.

At this point, the whole company will join in the great declaration of Faith, using the Nicene Creed, and will go forward to "the Breaking of the Bread".

It is on the second morning that another service will follow for "*The Declaration and Confirmation of the Appointment of the Existing Bishops and the Consecration of the New Bishops*". Here again, the early part of the service will be conducted by a Minister who is not one of the Bishops. It is he who will make the declaration when those Bishops who have been elected to Dioceses in the United Church are duly acknowledged to be given that authority in the Church. After this point, the remaining worship will be conducted by a Presiding Bishop, for it is *now* that the United Church has in its o ministry Bishops who have been duly pointed to serve within it.

What follows is the presentation Bishops-Elect, their examination and th consecration by the Presiding Bishop a other Bishops. Many will read with attenti and lively interest the questions to be addre ed to the Bishops-Elect, which cover t many sided duties which will be laid up them according to the constitution of t Church, as well as searching out the calli and personal devotion of the persons cc cerned. The last of the questions is in the terms:

> Will you be diligent in promoting t spread of the Gospel in all the wor and especially in your own dioces And will you constantly encourage yo ministers and people to fulfil their du of witnessing to others according to o Saviour's command?

As in the order for the Ordination Presbyters, which is also given in this boo let, though it will be for later use, it is a co of the Bible which is solemnly delivered each of the Bishops on their consecratio with a summons to them to be faithful their study and use of this Book. And th to each one, as a symbol of his special re ponsibilities and position, is given a pasto staff, with this final exhortation:

> Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd; fe them, devour them not. Hold up t weak, heal the sick, bind up the broke bring again the outcasts, seek the lo Faithfully minister discipline, but forg not mercy; that when the Chief Shephe shall appear, you may receive the neve fading crown of glory; through Jes Christ our Lord.

For those who wish to understand t conception of the episcopal office which visualised for the Church of North India a the Church of Pakistan, nothing would more illuminating than a careful study of t words of this whole service.

The Order of Service for the Ordination Presbyters has already been examined *Church Union—News and Views* by the Re T. S. Garrett (see Vol. 1, No. 4, Nov. 195 It is included in this booklet for rea reference.

W. S.

Methodist Synod Decision

From : Rev. C. C. Pande,
Convener,
Methodist Church, Church Union Committee,
Bankura.

26/7/1958.

To,
The Editor,
Church Union, News and Views,
Serampore.

ar Sir,

The North Indian Provincial Synod of the ethodist Church has passed the following commendation.

" This Synod has given consideration to e Plan of Church Union in India and kistan and while regretting that political ts outside the life of the Church make cessary the inauguration of separate united urches, in India and Pakistan, yet with ankfulness gives thanks to God for the ours of the past and for their result in is complete Plan of Union. Synod notes th satisfaction that in spite of the inaugura- n of two separate Churches, provision is ade for complete communion between the o Synods.

Synod notes that the basis of what is to be ne in inaugurating the new Churches is (a) at ' The Uniting Churches mutually ack- wledge each other's ministries as ministries Christ and His Sacraments ', and (b) that wing, to the divisions all their ministries are nited in scope and authority, not having the al of the whole Church'.

On this basis, Synod welcomes the decision effect the unification of the ministry by the utual laying on of hands in a solemn act of umility and rededication with prayer, thus eking the grace of God for wider and more fective fulfilment of their ministry. There- re Synod willingly accepts the unification one in which the uniting Churches submit eir ministries to God and to each other for lfilment.

The Synod believes that the rite of unifica- n is fully guarded against all but perverse misunderstanding and misrepresentation by the use of the following words,

(a) in the expression of the intention, ' This rite does not imply a denial of the reality of the ordination previously received by those now seeking to become presbyters in the united Church ; it is not re-ordination ; nor does it presume to bestow again the grace, gifts, character of authority that have already been bestowed on them.'

(b) in the act of laying on of hands ; ' For as much as thou was called to the Ministry of the Church of God within the———— Church to the Ministry of the Church of God, and are now called to the Ministry of the Church of God within the Church of North India, continue in these His gifts, and in accordance with His will to bestow on thee grace, commission and authority for the ministry of a Presbyter of the Church of God within this Church.'

Synod notes that in the act of unification the method set out in the plan ensures complete mutuality for all. Synod is of opinion that the re-ordering of the steps of inauguration is an improvement on the previous order, as it enables all the Bishops of the two uniting Episcopal Churches to be fully recognised by all the uniting Churches before they take part in the service for the unification of the ministry.

The Plan of Church Union is now prepared in Hindi and Bengali and the Synod directs that Churches shall give the deepest consideration to it and that Quarterly Meetings (Of all our Districts in the Methodist Church in India) shall record a definite vote upon it and send it to the next District Synods, so that the Provincial Synod of 1959 may make its final decision.

Writers in this Number

The Rev. T. S. Garrett, a Presbyter of the Church of South India, is on the staff of the Tamilnad Theological College, Tirumaraiyur.

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